



CPAC Newsletter

May 2004

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Does the Government Owe YOU Money?

Sound too good to be true? It may not be.

If you no longer have any eligible family members who require FEHB and/or FEGLI, you may be entitled to a refund of some of the premiums you have paid. For example, when your last eligible child turns 22, you should review your

FEHB and FEGLI elections.

If you no longer have an eligible family member (to include a spouse) that requires coverage under your FEHB, you should change from Self and Family coverage to Self-Only. If you have FEGLI Option C (Family Coverage), and you have no more eligible

family members, you should drop your family coverage. The change is effective the pay period following your child's 22nd birthday or loss of last eligible family member.

Please visit the ABC-C website or contact our office for more information.

TSP Open Season

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Open Season begins on Thursday, April 15th and will close on Wednesday, June 30th. Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) employees may contribute up to 14% of their base pay and Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) employees may contribute up to 9%. The IRS elective deferral limit for 2004 is \$13,000. (Note: The maximum percentage that you can

contribute has not changed since the last Open Season.)

If you are a Department of the Army (DA) civilian employee, you may visit the Army Benefits Center-Civilian (ABC-C) website at <https://www.abc.army.mil> to make your TSP Open Season election. You must click on the *Benefits/EBIS* button, input/create your Point-of-Entry (POE) password, and input/create your 6-digit

Personal Identification Number (PIN). If you have never created your PIN, you will need to first create a temporary 4-digit PIN that consists of your mmyy of birth (e.g. July 1945 would be 0745). Once inside the Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS) web application, you should click on the *Transactions* button and make your election in the *TSP Current Coverage* section.

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If you prefer, you may use the Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) at 1-877-276-9287. You must press 1 for DA Civilian employee, 2 to bypass the TSP Catch-Up instructions, 2 for Benefits and Entitlements, and 1 for current Army serviced employee. You will need to enter/create your 6-digit PIN and enter/verify your duty telephone number. If

you have never created your PIN, you will need to first create a temporary 4-digit PIN that consists of your mmyy of birth (e.g. July 1945 would be 0745). At the "main menu", press 3 for TSP and follow the prompts to make a TSP Open Season election. A POE password is not required on the IVRS automated telephone system.

If you are having technical

issues accessing either the EBIS website or IVRS automated telephone system, please contact the Southwest Civilian Personnel Operations Center (SWCPOC) Helpdesk at (785) 239-2000 or DSN 856-2000. They are available Monday through Friday from 7:30am to 4:00pm Central Time (CT).

How Do I Reach a Benefit Counselor?

Have you ever been frustrated because you cannot get to a live person? Well, this is a common complaint we hear at the ABC-C so we would like to provide a little information to make this an easier task.

After you dial our toll-free number 1-877-276-9287 (visit the ABC-C website for OCONUS numbers), you must press 1 for Army civilian employee, 2 for Benefits & Entitlements, and 1 for current Army employee. Then you will

need to input your Social Security Number (SSN) and 6-digit Personnel Identification Number (PIN). If you have never created your PIN, you will need to first create a temporary 4-digit PIN that consists of your mmyy of birth (e.g. July 1945 is 0745) and then enter/verify your duty telephone number.

At this point you will come to the "main menu". You must then press the number that best corresponds with the

purpose of your call (FEHB, Retirement, TSP, etc.). The following menu will give you the opportunity to press 0 to transfer to a benefit counselor.

We realize these are a lot of steps to go through to reach a live person, but these steps are necessary to provide the best security possible. Also, this will assist the counselor in preparing to answer your question.

Defense Travel System



It's here, and it's coming your way! The Defense Travel System (DTS), represents a whole new way of doing business for government. It delivers real, measurable results as proven in pilot tests.

DTS makes the travel process faster, easier, and better than ever before. DTS seamlessly automates the three DoD travel processes: Authorization, reservation, and voucher filing. Using

DTS, travelers are able to generate travel authorizations, make trip reservations, and route travel requests for approval, all from their desktop workstation. The

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system is paperless and uses DoD Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) certificates to digitally sign documents all from their desktop workstation. DTS is totally web-based. There is no need to load any software on the workstation other than a web browser plugin for digital signature authentication and system security. When the trip is complete, the traveler can quickly create a voucher

from the data already stored in the DTS system, and then electronically route it for approval and submission to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS). An electronic funds transfer from DFAS to the traveler's bank account completes the process. The Program Management Office - Defense Travel System (PMO-DTS) has developed an interim system to meet your immediate travel process

needs while at the same time preparing your organization for the DTS. This bridge system is called DTS-Limited and it's available now. The Defense Travel System will be deployed to DoD through FY 06. For more information, go to <http://www.defensetravel.osd.mil/dts/site>. As of March of this year, Ft. Detrick is on the DTS deployment schedule for FY 05.

Long-Term Care Program Broadens Eligibility

Section 561 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 (Pub. L. 108-136), November 24, 2003, broadens eligibility for participation in the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program as provided in Section 9001(1) of title

5, United States Code. The employees (and their qualified relatives) now eligible to enroll in the program include: (1) D.C. Government employees who were first employed by the D.C. Government before October 1, 1987; (2) former Federal em-

ployees vested in a retirement system who separated prior to attaining the minimum age for title to annuity; and (3) reservists transferred to the Retired Reserve under age 60 even though they are not yet receiving retirement pay.



Delegated Examining Authority

OPM has delegated their examining authority to the Department of Defense. DOD in turn has delegated the examining authority to the components for all geographic locations and positions except Administrative Careers With America and Administrative Law Judge positions. CPOCs receive examining authority from DOD through SAMR-CP-

PPD.

The delegation of examining authority gives the CPOCs the authority to perform non status competitive examination and certification to include the development of rating schedules, evaluation of applicants, and developing Certificates of Eligibles for career and career-conditional positions. With

delegated examining authority the CPOC performs some of the functions previously performed by OPM.

The CPOCs who requested and received delegated examining authority have established delegated examining units to process non status applicants. The delegated examining units perform

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under the general
administrative guidance of

OPM. Under delegated
examining authority,
applications are filed

directly with the CPOC.

New Reemployed Annuitant Policy

The new Reemployed Annuitant policy dated March 18, 2004 has been issued by DoD. The policy for employment of annuitants is based upon section 9902(j) of title 5, United States Code, as enacted by section 1101 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 (Public Law 108-136, November 24, 2003). The policy allows defense managers to hire

civil service retirees that meet the policy criteria to positions without a reduction in pay or annuity, which was required under a previous law. This benefit applies to those annuitants employed in appropriated fund positions on or after November 24, 2003. Hiring for GS-15 and below positions is delegated to the Secretaries of Military

Departments. These designees will further delegate this authority to managers and supervisors. As a reminder, the freeze on hiring annuitants remains in effect until delegation is received from the Secretary of the Army. We will advise you as soon as the Secretary of the Army re-delegates the authority.

Senior Army Workforce

“The SAW concept represents a major step forward for civilian training and management.”

I am pleased to announce a new website designed to provide information about the Senior Army Workforce (SAW) concept. The website, which went online the week of March 15, 2004, provides information about the SAW concept, its history, focus group schedules, and many key links that are important to educate the public about the SAW concept. The site is located at <http://www.cpol.army.mil/>.

The SAW concept represents a major step forward for civilian training and management. For the

first time in the Department of the Army, the SAW proposes to strategically manage senior civilian assets through central management, training and development, multifunctional career tracks, and a competency-based system that links human capital strategies with organizational mission, vision, and goals. The SAW Management Office (SAWMO), responsible for SAW Concept Operations and Development, is working to gain approval of the concept and integrate draft policies and

procedures with emerging Army and DoD initiatives.

The website includes information about the key tenets of the SAW concept. It will be both an educational and informational tool for Army civilians to use as we move from concept development to program implementation. This website is a tool that will grow as the concept grows.

The website also provides:

- Links to dates and location information for

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upcoming events hosted by the SAWMO, such as focus group workshops.

- Downloadable newsletters containing information on the latest steps in the SAW concept development that can be used as educational tools for the workforce.
- A breakdown of the differences between the current personnel system and the SAW.
- A history on the development of the SAW concept from the Civilian Personnel

Management System (CPMS) XXI to the Army Training and Leadership Development Panel (ATLDP).

The mission of SAW is to provide the Army with multifunctional civilian leaders in support of the Soldier, the Army and the nation. In line with the Army's transformation effort, the vision of the SAW is to develop leaders with multiple and integrated skill sets, capable of transforming to a changing Army mission, and competitive with the

nation's best. Follow-on briefings to the Army's senior leadership and other stakeholders are forthcoming and workforce education plans are under development. If the concept is approved, we will deliver extensive training to Army civilians. If you need additional information about the SAW, or wish to request a briefing or presentation on the Senior Army Workforce Concept, please contact Ms. Nancy Spurlin at (703) 325-0987 or DSN 221; E-mail: nancy.spurlin@us.army.mil.

FASCLASS Release 4.7

The Policy and Program Development Division, Workforce Effectiveness Branch, Position Classification Team, announces that FASCLASS, Release 4.7, was fully and successfully deployed on April 5, 2004. Numerous new features were contained within this release such as:

- The Occupation Series and Grade fields have been added to the Search Sequence.
- The Command Code field has been added to the Search By MACOM.
- The default sort on the PD by UIC report has been changed to Organization Code.
- New G-1 Logo has been added to the FASCLASS homepage.
- Five additional fields have been added to the More Title and More Citation screens. Now allowing a total of 30 additional titles and citations to the create screen.
- A reminder of nightly maintenance message has been added.
- An explanation of Duty Score has been added to the Advance Search screen.
- The first and last name fields have been reversed on the create FASCLASS accounts screens.
- New Encumbered PD report was created for Project Manager use only.



Position Classification Standard for Fire Protection

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has released for application the new Position Classification Standard for the Fire Protection and Prevention Series GS-0081. The standard may be accessed at <http://www.opm.gov/fedclass/0081/gs0081.pdf>. This new issuance is available for downloading either directly from the OPM website or through the OPM portal at the Civilian Personnel On Line

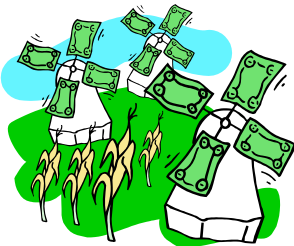
website.

This standard is an updated and expanded standard rather than a complete revision. The intent of this revised standard is to recognize and address structural firefighting duties and responsibilities exercised in conjunction with emergency medical services and hazardous materials response assignments. However, if a position does not have a

primary requirement for firefighting knowledge and skills, the position must be classified using other standards. Positions in other series may continue to be assigned emergency medical or hazardous materials responsibilities as primary or collateral duties.

A memorandum is being released to all MACOMs with more complete information.

TSP Readies for New Investment Fund



The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board voted Monday 19 April 2004 to officially endorse a plan that would offer federal workers an automatically diversified retirement investment option.

Board members are in support of the "life cycle plan" which will be offered early next year. The life cycle plan would be a collection of existing funds, automatically diversified and adjusted over time to account for each federal worker's investment preferences. (For example: A young worker could opt for a more aggressive investment strategy to increase potential returns.

The program could automatically shift the investments to lower yield, lower risk funds as the worker grew closer to retirement.)

Board members stated that the plan was "the best way to provide professionally managed asset allocation to TSP participants, particularly those who do not have the time, knowledge or interest to actively manage their accounts."

The option will be voluntary, and TSP participants can choose to invest any percentage of their retirement assets in the plan. More than 3 million federal employees and retirees have more than \$134 billion invested

in the TSP.

To launch the life cycle option, the Thrift Board will hire a contractor to develop the asset allocation program and a communications program to educate participants. Board members and TSP staff said Monday that the communications program would be helpful in teaching TSP members about asset allocation, even if they decide not to join the life cycle plan.

TSP Board members said that in a best-case projection, about 10 percent of TSP investors are expected to join the life cycle plan in its first five years. TSP staff said

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this is comparable to the industry standard. TSP Board members said the plan was necessary to encourage participants to diversify.

The 401(k)-style Thrift Savings Plan currently offers five funds: the C, F, G, S and I funds. The S and I fund were added to the plan in May 2001. The C Fund invests in stocks of large companies, the F

Fund in bonds, the G Fund in government securities, the S Fund in small- and mid-size companies and the I Fund in international stocks.

Performance Evaluation

This is the second in the series of Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) Articles, which discuss performance. This article focuses on the second of five key processes of performance management, or developing performance (the others are planning, monitoring, rating, and rewarding performance).

As with all processes of performance management, developing or increasing the capacity to perform should be solidly integrated and aligned with organizational goals. This article highlights approaches to developing performance (using formal and informal means), as well as the importance of developing the processes, systems, and structures within which employees perform.

In an effective organization, employee developmental needs are evaluated and addressed. Developing in this instance means increasing the capacity to perform

through training, giving assignments that introduce new skills or higher levels of responsibility, improving work processes, or other methods. Providing employees with training and developmental opportunities encourages good performance, strengthens job-related skills and competencies, and helps employees keep up with changes in the workplace, such as the introduction of new technology. Carrying out the processes of performance management provides an excellent opportunity to identify developmental needs.

Developing performance is more than just training employees. Training has come to refer to instructors teaching individuals in a classroom setting. Recently, with the introduction of computers and distance learning technologies to the workplace, the term has taken on a broader meaning to include on-the-job training and

technology-based training. In contrast, developing employees has a much larger scope and covers all an agency's efforts to foster learning, which happens on the job every day. When agencies focus on developing their employees' capacity to perform rather than just training them, employees will be able to adapt to a variety of situations, which is vital for the survival, well being, and goal achievement of individuals as well as organizations.

Performance development can be done formally and informally. Some Formal developmental options include:

- traditional training in structured courses, classrooms, and formal development programs; and
- self-study courses, including those using computer technology, such as distance learning over the Internet, CD-ROM courses, and Intranet courses provided to

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employees addressing agency-specific skills and competencies.

While managers have a large influence over formal training, they have even greater impact on creating a climate for informal employee development, which can take a wide variety of forms:

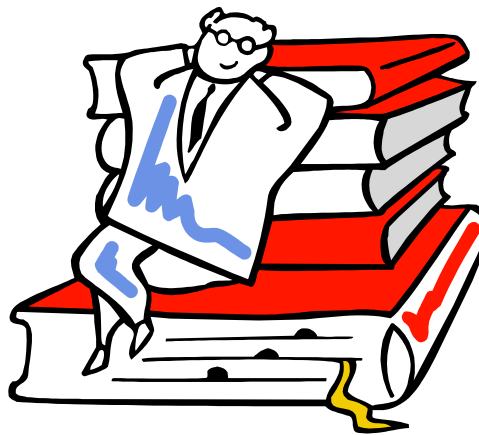
- Feedback is a natural part of the monitoring process of performance management, but specific and timely feedback to employees about their performance against established expectations also provides the foundation for discussing developmental needs.
- Job rotations and special assignments can stretch and challenge employees and broaden their

understanding of the organization.

- Coaching and counseling provides individualized advice and instruction.
- Mentoring helps employees clarify career goals, understand the organization, analyze strengths and developmental needs, build support networks, and deal with roadblocks.
- Using the manager as an informal teacher acknowledges that managers consciously teach employees through their own model, habits, and system of values.
- Learning teams can form to meet regularly to focus on improving performance.
- Self-development includes a broad

collection of techniques and approaches, such as self-analysis of competencies and interests, reading lists, and attending demonstrations at other organizations.

Although these informal developmental strategies cost very little, they have potentially big payoffs in terms of improved individual and organizational performance. Regardless to which approach you choose, the capacity to perform through training, giving assignments that introduce new skills or higher level of responsibility, improving work processes, or other approaches is the key to successful performance development.



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